Pride Month: Xbox Ambassadors Share Their Stories

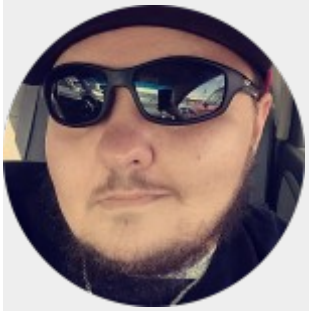
Community Blue Tiger Jun 18, 2020

We believe in highlighting and amplifying community voices. In celebration of Pride Month, we reached out to Xbox Ambassadors and asked community members who identify as LGBTQIA+ to share what their favorite video games mean to them. We received hundreds of responses and with difficulty narrowed it down to seven.

Here are their stories:

WOLFYOFVALHALLA

LGBTQIA+ Identities: Transgender heteroflexible man



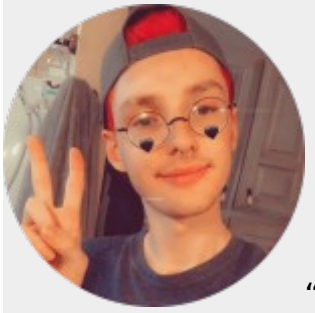
“I’m a 30-year-old transman. I have been medically transitioning for almost 4 years now. I have been gaming on Xbox Live since 2007 with Halo 3 launch. I really got into Destiny when it came out. My online friends and I made a great raid team, but I was really starting to struggle with hiding the real me.

Especially from my boys. They are a great group of men. I consider a few of them as brothers. Have even met up with a couple of them. As the last DLC dropped for Destiny, we found another group that was a lot like us. We never had empty fireteams or raid groups. It was such an amazing time. I must mention, on top of being trans. I am disabled as well. These people are my interaction with the outside world for the most part. I started to really struggle with myself.

I had come out to my siblings, my best friend, and working up the courage to tell my mom. One day, it was just my friend Pandora and I in a group chat. I had just kind of started to word vomit. She didn't even hesitate. Automatically started using he/him pronouns. Using my true name, and then she offered to do a major thing for me. She said she'd get all the friends together and tell them, so if anyone had a negative reaction. I wouldn't have to go through that. I said yes. Two days later, out of almost 25 buds only one took it negatively. They didn't even blink. No one even slipped up on my name or pronouns. They gave me tips on how to shave and everything. They have become my family. My own cheerleaders. Anytime I hit a milestone, they are celebrating with me. It's been 4 years. They saved my life."

HAIMISHHORROR

LGBTQIA+ Identities: Queer

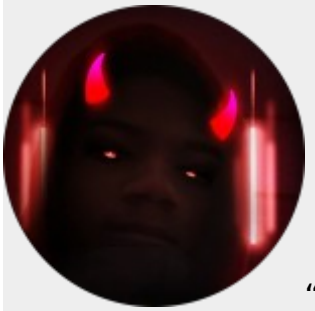


"My absolute favourite moment to happen to me in a game was the first time I played Gone Home. I am a huge fan of narrative-driven "walking simulators" but this one felt different. It was a story I could relate to because as a kid I moved around a lot and hearing Sam talk about being the new girl and not having any friends resonated with me. Then she met Lonnie. the slow building of their friendship and hearing Sam talk about how much she liked Lonnie, how much she hoped Lonnie felt the same way had me hoping it could be more than a friendship. When the reveal finally came and Sam and Lonnie expressed how they felt I had to put the controller down because I just needed a second, it brought back so many feelings of being a queer teenager and feeling alone in the world with no one to relate to, then finally finding someone you could be your true self around. I couldn't help but cry as silly as it sounds because I was so happy for Sam, even

though she was fictional I was glad that she got a happy ending. I eventually stopped crying long enough to finish the game and I'll just say that it is now that one game I recommend to everybody, not only because of the amazing details, artistry, and voice acting but also for the wonderful storytelling that reminded me that I don't have to feel alone anymore."

ZAMARROW17

LGBTQIA+ Identities: Gay



"My favorite video game happens to be Forza Horizon 4 because it's what led me to the life I have right now. I've developed a lot of good relationships with nearly hundreds of people and overall, just let me be open about myself cause it didn't give me shame in any way.

Forza had also given me more skill with making car liveries and was what inspired me to go more into video editing where I create a few montages with photos I've taken or videos I've recorded with the inclusion of music I select that would go well with the video in question. Of course, Forza even led to my first LGBTQIA+ relationship with someone who shared the same interest."

ZamArrow17 Pride Month Video Story: (Click This Text to view Video as Google Docs doesn't have Native Video Player :/ - Sol)

HELIO1600

LGBTQIA+ Identities: Gay

“I’d like to share my coming out story and how playing online gave me the encouragement and confidence to embrace the fact I was gay and to own my sexuality. This is my favourite gaming story.

It was 2006, shortly after my sixteenth birthday, I’d just come home from school. As per my normal routine, I’d rip my uniform off, turn the PC on, make a cuppa, and sit online all night, until mum would pop her head around the door and suggest “Perhaps it’s about time you called it a night.” It was Friday, my favourite day, I could stay online longer. There was no school tomorrow! The joy!

I was feeling pretty down. I was having trouble coming to terms with my inner feelings towards other guys. I wasn't normal. Surely? I mean my brothers who had girlfriends would make passing comments

"How come you don't have a girlfriend yet? You're older than us."

Should I tell them? Have this over and done with? Perhaps it'll be easier if I just got it out the way?

The guys in my guild at the time, were organizing a raid. I was an esteemed raider. I had the top tier gear and would grind endlessly to always stay on top of the game.

"Hey!" I got a whisper come though. Great, it's Serverina. The Guild leader. Feeling down I wasn't really in the mood to raid tonight. "Heya!" I message back anyway. "You up for tonight? Think we can finish the last boss," she is obviously excited, we've made so much progress.

My heart sank, and it kept sinking, I'm about to let the guild down "Sorry, not tonight. Got a lot on my mind, think I'm going to just do some quests," feeling sorry for myself. Serverina replied, quicker than normal, this time it was different.

"What's up? You're not your normal self lately." At this point I was shaking, should I tell a complete stranger, someone I've only ever spoken to online, what was going on? What I'm trying to come to terms with?

I did.

"Hey, I don't know how to word this, so I'm just going to type it how it comes to mind" I'm typing so fast, it's littered with typos.

"Okay. Go ahead, I'm not judging, I'm all ears."

I pause, going over and over, should I do it? It's now or never.

"I think I'm gay. I fancy a boy in my class at school and I can't help feeling like I'm not normal," palms sweaty, hand trembling, my head spinning with all these unrealistic scenarios.

"Oh, bubs. You're very normal. I can understand why you would feel that way, people judge, people aren't kind, but you're being true to yourself, that's all that matters. You're kind and you're part of our guild."

Suddenly, this huge weight is lifted, swelling with emotion, I can't help but cry.

Severina added “The guild is here for you, we’re your family. We’re your friends and we will be here for you. Always.”

I sat there crying, red-faced and looking worse-for-wear, my mum pops her head around the door.

“Sweetie, what’s the matter?” All full of sympathy, oozing love like mothers do.

I inhale deeply “I think you need’ to come in, sit on the bed, I’ve got something to tell you,” stammering and tripping on my words. “I’m gay mum. Sorry. I’m a disappointment. I feel like I’ve let you down.”

She pulls me in for a cuddle, I’m sobbing at this point. “You’re not a disappointment, nor have you let me down, I carried you for nine months and love you unconditionally,” her grip tightening. It soothes me.

I’ve always said that the communities and the people who play make the game. We share a common interest and share the same goal. As a community, we breathe life into the game. We share memories, achievements, and forge epic adventures together. Without prejudice or discrimination because Steve is Steve and Alex is Alex.

It gave me the opportunity to come out and confidently say “Yes I’m gay,” without being judged or scrutinized. I’m now free to play as an Orc Warrior (with my boyfriend of course!).

Just this time, I’m full of confidence and I share the kindness with others. That same kindness I was given so abundantly. It made me a better person.”

MESHMASTER5

LGBTQIA+ Identities: Bisexual, Aromantic

“From the original starting point of queer-coding villains, to where we are now, the impact of video games has been huge in how I’ve felt about coming out and being LGBT+.

Growing up, there were many characters with whom I related to and looking back, from actions, styles of presentation, and the way that characters were portrayed, many of them seem to be villains. There were exceptions, of course, with games that had a more progressive development that raised a lot of questions internally about why my characters seemed to jump through the romance options for characters of any gender.

Starting back with Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic, characters in that game seemed intent on presenting options to flirt and the relationships between characters, despite very few full romantic choices, seemed to open up statements of “There’s clearly a chemistry between them.” Pushing through the years, the developing world of RPGs.

Assassin’s Creed has been another point where characters such as Leonardo Da Vinci, Jacob Frye, and most recently the pair of Alexis and Kassandra, grew to an importance in how I felt, none following the stereotypes that the world had imposed on their sexualities. Further breaking down my discomfort in how I was, acting to camp to be considered straight yet acting too masculine to be accepted in my identity.

During my later teen years, where my internal crisis of identity was causing me anxiety and no ends of stress, it was at this time that I was introduced to Dragon Age, a game series where the choices were varied and the representation was diverse in comparison to any other game I’d played, there was no judgment, no stereotypes and during my most questioning time, provided me with a respite enough to put my mind at ease about how I behaved.

I felt kinship to some characters, protective of others, proud of others as well! From Ciri in the Witcher series to everyone in Fable! I’ve never felt the need to single out and play games that allow me to express my individuality, but when gaming, whenever I’ve been allowed to, I’ve felt more in tune, growing to care for characters and relating to their struggles, allowing me to invest in the story more.
However, despite video games helping me come to terms with my bisexuality, there have only been characters recently whom I feel in tune with, in an asexual sense.

Asexual representation is still a developing world, only being able to think of The Chief (as a result of his modifications) from Halo, Maya from Borderlands 2, The Riddler, despite being a villain, from the Batman games, and most recently, as the one that’s fully delved into her romantic struggles, Parvati from The Outer Worlds.

Parvati is a character I can’t help but relate to and most recently, has made life for me much easier when discussing my sexuality. Being able to reference a character, however few, has always made it easier to explain

and answer questions to and Parvati provided me that outlet, where relating to the struggles of dating while being asexual had sparked the idea and yet, gave me lessons in being comfortable with being different.

Video games have helped in developing the way I present myself, gaining confidence and comfort in my own identity, while also enhancing my experience of stories, feeling deeper levels of connection to the character that's on the screen. Gaming has been a constant source of acceptance, where various RPGs have allowed me to act as myself and not be judged for doing so. As one of the biggest forms of entertainment in the modern world, I believe that video games provide a platform to tell stories, tales, and broaden horizons and perspectives. I just hope that games keep developing to support and represent the vast array of minorities that play them!"

AMI THE ROBOT

LGBTQIA+ Identities: Non-Binary, Asexual

"My favorite video games are ones that are able to bring up your positivity and personality in your game character. Games that let you change how your body looks, whether it's character creators, picking out a cool character from a list of characters, or just simply buying clothes for people you play as, it always felt like a way to properly represent myself.

Back when I was growing up, I lived in an area with almost non-existent LGBTQIA+ support. There was really no way to properly represent yourself in the real world without the possibility of getting bullied or possibly outright attacked. As a result, a kid like me growing up in an area like this, only had one outlet for that: Character creators.

Character creators in games like Saints Row 3 and MMO's Like Final Fantasy XIV come to mind. It's a place where you can be weird, stylish, extravagant, whatever. It rewards you for being yourself, whether you want to wear a mascot suit for laughs or thought up of awesome outfit ideas that you don't know how to execute IRL. For someone like me who's non-binary and have social anxiety issues expressing myself in public, stuff like that is a gold mine for expression.

Whenever I see character creators start tearing down gender boundaries for people discovering who they are, it makes me really happy. Go be yourself, You’re valid.”

BURNISHEDORCHID

LGBTQIA+ Identities: Pansexual and polyamorous

“I live in a small town in Oregon and it’s always been hard for me to meet other LGBTQIA+ people in the community. Playing Destiny and Destiny 2 opened me up to clans full of supportive people. Two of my best friends in Destiny are also pan and poly, and we’ve been able to share our experiences and ups and downs of navigating life while pan/poly and what that means for our identities.”

THANK YOU

It is not easy sharing very personal experiences publicly. Thank you to everyone who shared their LGBTQIA+ gaming story with us. We appreciate every one of you. Thank you.